



U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

Indonesia

International Religious Freedom Report 2006

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

The constitution provides for "all persons the right to worship according to his or her own religion or belief" and states that "the nation is based upon belief in one supreme God." While the Government generally respected freedom of religion, restrictions continued on some types of religious activity and on unrecognized religions. The Government sometimes tolerated discrimination against and the abuse of religious groups by private actors, and often failed to punish perpetrators.

There was little change in respect for religious freedom during the period covered by the report. Most of the population enjoyed a high degree of religious freedom. Confucians enjoyed a higher degree of religious freedom after concerned government offices recognized Confucianism as an official religion in early 2006; however, with the addition of Confucianism, the Government recognizes only six major religions. Atheists or persons of nonrecognized faiths frequently experienced official discrimination, often in the context of civil registration of marriages and births or the issuance of identity cards.

The public generally respected religious freedom; however, extremist groups used violence and intimidation to force thirty-four small unlicensed churches and at least seven Ahmadiyya complexes to close in separate incidents over the course of the reporting period. Some government officials and mass Muslim organizations rejected the Ahmadiyya interpretation of Islam resulting in the discrimination and abuse of its followers. Religiously-motivated violence and vigilante acts in Maluku and North Maluku declined significantly, although, as in past years, Central Sulawesi experienced sporadic bombings, shootings, and other violence despite efforts to restore security and promote reconciliation. Government officials worked with Muslim and Christian community leaders to diffuse tensions in conflict areas, particularly in Central Sulawesi and the Moluccas. While Aceh remained the only province authorized to implement Islamic law, or Shari'a, regencies (local districts) outside of Aceh promulgated local laws implementing elements of Shari'a.

In June 2005 the Council of Ulemas (MUI) issued eleven new fatwas (religious decrees) including one that renewed a 1980 fatwa that banned Ahmadiyya. The government formed the MUI in 1975 as the state's highest Islamic authority. Although the government also funds and appoints MUI's members, MUI is not a government body. Its edicts, or fatwas, are designed to be moral guiding principles for Muslims and, although they are not legally binding, society and the Government seriously consider MUI opinions when making decisions or drafting legislation. The July 2005 fatwa influenced some societal discrimination during the reporting period.

The U.S. government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. The embassy promoted religious freedom and tolerance through exchanges and civil society development.

Section I. Religious Demography

An archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, the country covers an area of approximately 1.8 million square miles (0.7 million square miles landmass) and had a population estimated at 241 million.

The Indonesian Central Statistic Bureau (BPS) conducts a census every ten years. The latest data available, from 2000, drew on 201,241,999 survey responses; the BPS estimated that the census missed 4.6 million persons. According to the BPS report, 88.2 percent of the population described themselves as Muslim, 5.9 percent Protestant, 3.1 percent Catholic, 1.8 percent Hindu, 0.8 percent Buddhist, and 0.2 percent "other," including traditional indigenous religions, other Christian groups, and Jewish. The country's religious composition remained a politically charged issue, and some Christians, Hindus, and members of other minority faiths argued that the census undercounted non-Muslims. The Government does not recognize atheism.

Most Muslims in the country follow the Sunni interpretation of Islam: the Shi'a headquarters in Jakarta estimated there were one to three million Shi'a practitioners nationwide. In general the mainstream Muslim community follows two orientations: "modernists," who closely adhere to scriptural orthodox theology while embracing modern learning and modern concepts; and predominantly Javanese "traditionalists," who often follow charismatic religious scholars and organize around Islamic boarding schools. The leading "modernist" social organization, Muhammadiyah, claimed approximately thirty million followers, while the largest "traditionalist" social organization, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), claimed forty million.

Smaller Islamic organizations covered a broad range of doctrinal orientations. At one end of the ideological spectrum lay the Liberal Islam Network, which promotes an individual interpretation of doctrine. At the other end existed groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir Indonesia (HTI), which advocates a pan-Islamic caliphate, and the Indonesian Mujahidin Council (MMI), which advocates implementation of Shari'a as a precursor to an Islamic state. Many other organizations fell between these poles, including multimillion member Islamic organizations such as the Sulawesi-based al-Khairaat.

Separate from the country's dominant Sunni Islam population, a small minority of people subscribed to the Ahmadiyya interpretation of Islam. There were 242 Ahmadiyya branches throughout the country.

Small numbers of other messianic Islamic groups exist, including the Malaysian-affiliated Darul Arqam, the syncretist Indonesian Jamaah Salamulla (also called the Salamulla Congregation), and the Indonesian Islamic Propagation Institute (LDII).

Internal migration altered the demographic makeup over the past three decades, increasing the percentage of Muslims in eastern parts of the country that were formerly predominantly Christian. Although in previous years the government-sponsored transmigration from heavily populated Java and Madura to less populated areas contributed to the increase in the Muslim population in resettlement areas, most recent Muslim migration was apparently spontaneous. The economic and political consequences of such migration contributed to religious conflicts in Maluku and Central Sulawesi and to a lesser extent in Papua.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs estimated 6,501,680 Hindus lived in the country. The Hindu association Parishada Hindu Dharma Indonesia (PHDI) claimed the Hindu population is much larger. Hindus accounted for almost 90 percent of the population in Bali. Balinese Hinduism developed various local characteristics that distinguish it from Hinduism as practiced on the Indian subcontinent. Hindu minorities (called "Keharingan") also reside in Central and East Kalimantan, the city of Medan (North Sumatra), South and Central Sulawesi, and Lombok (West Nusa Tenggara). Some of these Hindus left Bali as part of the Government's transmigration program. Hindu groups such as Hare Krishna and followers of the Indian spiritual leader Sai Baba also are present, although in small numbers.

Some indigenous faiths, including the "Naurus" on Seram Island in Maluku Province, incorporated Hindu beliefs. The Naurus combine Hindu and animist beliefs, and many also adopted some Protestant principles. The Tamil community in Medan represented another important concentration of Hindus. North Sumatra had a Sikh population of more than ten thousand, most residing in Pematang Siantar or Medan. The population formed part of the North Sumatra Punjabi community, otherwise primarily Hindu. Eight Sikh gurdwaras (temples) are located in North Sumatra. Sikhs, however, were not allowed to identify themselves as such on their identity cards or birth or marriage certificates, and therefore most registered as "Hindu".

Among Buddhists, approximately 60 percent followed the Mahayana school, Theravada followers accounted for 30 percent, and the remaining 10 percent belonged to the Tantrayana, Tridharma, Kasogatan, Nichiren, and Maitreya schools. According to the Young Generation of Indonesian Buddhists (GMBI), most adherents lived in Java, Bali, Lampung, West Kalimantan, the Riau islands, and Jakarta; ethnic Chinese made up an estimated 60 percent of the country's Buddhists. Two major Buddhist social organizations exist, the Indonesian Great Sangha Conference (KASI) and the Indonesian Buddhist Council (WALUBI), and many adherents associate themselves with one or the other.

The number of adherents of Confucianism remained unclear because at the time of the national census in 2000 respondents were not allowed to identify themselves as Confucian. The percentage of practicing Confucians may have increased after the Government lifted restrictions related to the faith in 2000, such as the right to celebrate publicly the Chinese New Year. The Supreme Council for Confucian Religion in Indonesia (MATAKIN) estimated that ethnic Chinese made up 95 percent of Confucians with the balance mostly indigenous Javanese. Many Confucians also practiced Buddhism and Christianity. MATAKIN urged the Government to again include Confucian as a census category.

An estimated twenty million people in Java, Kalimantan, and Papua practiced animism and other types of traditional belief systems termed "Aliran Kepercayaan." Many of those who practice Kepercayaan described it as more of a meditation-based spiritual path than a religion. Some animists combined their beliefs with one of the government-recognized religions.

Descendants of Iraqi and Armenian Jews, who came to the country more than a century ago to trade spices, still practiced their faith in Surabaya. They have a small inactive synagogue. A small Jewish community also existed in Jakarta.

The Baha'i community reported that it had thousands of members in the country, but there were no reliable figures available.

Falun Dafa (also known as Falun Gong) representatives claimed the group, which considers itself a spiritual organization instead of a religion, has two thousand to three thousand followers in the country, nearly half of whom lived in Yogyakarta, Bali, and Medan.

No data existed on the religious affiliations of foreign nationals and immigrants.

Approximately 175 foreign missionaries, primarily Christian, operated in the country. Many worked in Papua, Kalimantan, and other areas with large numbers of animists.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The constitution provides "all persons the right to worship according to their own religion or belief" and states that "the nation is based upon belief in one supreme God." Despite its overwhelming Muslim majority, Indonesia is not an Islamic state. Over the past fifty years, many Islamic groups sporadically sought to establish an Islamic state, but the country's mainstream Muslim community has rejected the idea. An Islamic state is also incompatible with the country's founding ideology, Pancasila. The Government generally respected religious freedom; however, some restrictions existed on certain types of religious activity and on unrecognized religions. The Government sometimes tolerated extremist groups that used violence and intimidation against religious groups, and it often failed to punish perpetrators of such violence.

The Government requires officially-recognized religions to comply with Ministry of Religious Affairs and other ministerial directives, such as the Revised Regulation on Building Houses of Worship (2006), Overseas Aid to Religious Institutions in Indonesia (1978), and the Guidelines for the Propagation of Religion (1978).

The Government, in consultation with major religious groups, revised the 1969 Joint Ministerial Decree on the Construction of Houses of Worship in 2006 in response to militant groups' use of the 1969 decree to force the closure of unregistered churches. The stated goal of the revision was to make it easier to open new houses of worship. The revised decree requires religious groups that want to build a new house of worship to obtain the signatures of at least ninety congregation members and sixty persons of other faiths in the community that support the establishment and approval from the local religious affairs office. Some religious groups complained that the revised decree made it too difficult to establish a house of worship, while others argued that the increased clarity of the new decree would improve the situation by diminishing conflicting interpretations of the 1969 decree. The Guidelines for Overseas Aid to Religious Institutions requires domestic religious organizations to obtain approval from the Ministry of Religion for funding received from overseas donors. The Guidelines for Propagation of Religion ban proselytizing under most circumstances.

The Child Protection Act of 2002 makes attempting to convert minors to a religion other than their own through "tricks" and/or "lies" a crime punishable by up to five years in prison. This act was used to convict three Christian women who were convicted of trying to convert Muslim children.

Article 156 of the criminal code makes spreading hatred, heresy, and blasphemy punishable up to five years in jail. Although the law applies to all officially recognized religions, it is most often applied to cases involving Islam. This law was used in a number of cases during the reporting period.

The question of implementing Shari'a generated controversy and concern during the period covered by this report. Aceh remained the only province within the country in which the central Government specifically authorized Shari'a; however, Parliament reviewed a highly controversial draft antipornography bill that would outlaw displaying "sensual body parts," kissing in public, and any writings, art, recordings, or broadcasts with sexually explicit content, all of which is broadly defined. The draft bill sparked a heated national debate and led to large demonstrations (both for and against). Opponents of the bill said that it was an attempt by proponents of Shari'a law to implement Shari'a through the "back door." At the end of the reporting period, the bill was still under review.

The Government's jurisdiction over religious matters did not prevent approximately thirty regencies and municipalities across the country from promulgating Shari'a-inspired regulations at the local level. Fifty-six parliament members signed a petition requesting a national review of Shari'a-based local laws to test their accordance with the constitution but later dropped their petition. Press reports quoted Muhammad Ma'ruf, minister of home affairs, as stating governors should be responsible for reviewing local laws; however, at the end of the reporting period, neither the central Government nor local governments had not reviewed any Shari'a-inspired regulations.

In 2003 Presidential Decree 11/2003 formally established Shari'a courts in Aceh by renaming the existing religious courts while retaining their infrastructure, jurisdiction, and staff. The judges of these new Shari'a courts stated that they would focus on cases related to the "performance of Islamic duties in daily life." Sofyan Saleh, head of the Islamic Law Supreme Court, reported that immediately after the December 2004 tsunami, Aceh's Shari'a courts had a docket of approximately six thousand cases, two-thirds of which dealt with inheritance or other property-related matters. Family law cases dramatically decreased, but the focus on property matters continued during the reporting period.

According to press reports, during the reporting period, the Government caned at least eighty-four persons in Aceh for violation of Shari'a: thirteen for being alone with persons of the opposite sex who were not blood relatives, seventeen for consuming alcohol, and fifty-four for gambling. Public canings sometimes drew crowds in the thousands. The Government sentenced some persons to up to forty lashings; some persons subsequently required hospitalization. Unlike during the last reporting period, those the Government caned did not have to serve an additional common law sentence.

Also in Aceh, efforts to educate the public about Shari'a included a high-profile public education campaign in the weeks leading up to the fasting month of Ramadan (October 2005). Shopkeepers faced the possibility of six lashes if they did not close their businesses for midday prayers during Ramadan. The program lasted only a few weeks and applied only to Muslims. Aceh Province deployed hundreds of Shari'a police to enforce Shari'a. They worked jointly with the civil police to investigate and prosecute cases of Shari'a law violation. At times the Shari'a police detained persons for "public education" if caught wearing improper Islamic dress or dating without an escort, but police generally did not arrest or charge them with crimes. The city of Banda Aceh no longer operated a "Mosque Brigade" to ensure appropriate Muslim dress. When popular bands Radja and Ratu played a joint concert in the city of Banda Aceh in March 2006, the Government erected partitions to separate male and female concertgoers but did not punish fans who ignored the barriers.

Between 2002 and 2005 Bulukumba Regency in South Sulawesi promulgated four local laws implementing elements of Shari'a for all Muslims in the regency. The local laws enforced Islamic dress, antialcohol and narcotics measures, with caning as a form of punishment. The Bulukumba regent claimed that 100 percent of Muslim women wore headscarves. In Padang, West Sumatra, the mayor instructed all Muslim women to wear a headscarf; local authorities enforced this requirement. The regulations did not apply to non-Muslims, nor were they enforced in the beach area frequented by international tourists.

The Madura Regency of Pamekasan established a local Shari'a implementation committee in 2003 calling for the wearing of Muslim attire by Muslim civil servants and the cessation of both public and work activities during the call to prayer. On December 31, 2005, Maros Regency in South Sulawesi, also passed three local laws similar to those in Bulukumba Regency. In 2006 the mayor of Tangerang in Banten Province passed a ban on public displays of affection, alcohol, and prostitution. These bans apply to both Muslims and non-Muslims. The controversial antiprostitution clause vaguely defines a prostitute as anyone drawing suspicion based on her attitude, behavior, or dress and places the burden on suspected women to prove their innocence. Tangerang tried thirty-one women as prostitutes, including a married mother of two

found waiting at a bus stop during the early evening. Advocacy groups challenged the constitutionality of Tangerang's regulation.

Divorce remained a legal option available to members of all religions, but Muslims who wished to seek divorce generally had to turn to the Islam-based family court system, while non-Muslims obtained a divorce through the national court system. Marriage law for Muslims draws from Shari'a and allows a man to have up to four wives, provided that he can provide equally for each of the wives. For a man to take a second, third, or fourth wife, he must obtain court permission and the consent of the first wife, conditions not always met in practice. Women reportedly found it difficult to refuse, and Islamic women's groups divided over whether the system needed revision. In divorce cases, women often bore a heavier evidentiary burden than men, especially in the Islam-based family court system. The law requires courts to oblige the former husband to provide alimony or its equivalent, but no enforcement mechanism existed, and divorced women rarely received such support. No discussion took place during the reporting period of an Islamic family law draft that aimed to enhance the legal rights of Muslim women in many aspects of marriage and divorce law. Minister of Religious Affairs M. Maftuh Basyuni shelved the draft in 2004.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs extends official status to six faiths: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and as of January 2006, Confucianism. In previous years, the ministry did not offer services to Confucianism. Religious organizations other than the six recognized faiths can register with the Government, but only with the Ministry for Culture and Tourism and only as social organizations. This restricts certain religious activities. Unregistered religious groups do not have the right to establish a house of worship and have administrative difficulties with identity cards and registering marriages and births.

The Government permits the practice of the indigenous belief system of Kepercayaan, as a cultural manifestation, not a religion. Followers of "Aliran Kepercayaan" must register with the Ministry of Education's Department of Education. Some religious minorities whose activities the Government had banned in the past, such as those of the Rosicrucians, were allowed to operate openly. The national Government did not formally ban Ahmadiyya activities, but some local governments did. Despite the central Government's jurisdiction over religious affairs, the administration did not take a clear position on the bans.

Some Muslim, Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist holy days are national holidays. Muslim holy days celebrated include the Ascension of the Prophet, Id al-Fitr, Id al-Adha, the Muslim New Year, and the Birth of the Prophet Muhammad. National Christian holy days are Christmas, Good Friday, and the Ascension of Christ. Three other national holidays are the Hindu holiday Nyepi, the Buddhist holiday Waisak, and Chinese New Year, celebrated by Confucians and other Chinese. In Bali all Hindu holy days are regional holidays, and public servants and others do not work on Saraswati Day, Galungan, and Kuningan.

As in previous years, during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, many local governments ordered either the closure or a reduction in operating hours of various types of entertainment establishments. A Jakarta decree ordered the month-long closure of nonhotel bars, discos, nightclubs, sauna spas, massage parlors, and venues for live music. Billiard parlors, karaoke bars, hotel bars, and discos operated for up to four hours per night. Some members of minority faiths, as well as some Muslims, felt these orders infringed on their rights. Enforcement varied.

The Government did not take any steps to implement controversial provisions of the 2003 education law that required private elementary and secondary schools to provide students with religious instruction in their own faith. Under preceding laws, students had to choose religious instruction from five types of classes, representing only Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

During the period covered by this report, a number of government officials and prominent religious and political leaders interacted with interfaith groups, including the Society for Inter-religious Dialog (MADIA), the Indonesian Anti-Discrimination Movement (GANDI), the Indonesian Conference on Religion and Peace (ICRP), the Indonesian Committee on Religion and Peace (also ICRP), the Institute for Interfaith Dialog (Interfidei), and National People's Solidarity (Solidaritas Nusa Bangsa).

The government of the province of North Sumatra sponsored an organization named FORKALA that united representatives of all recognized religious faiths. The organization sought interfaith dialogue as a way of avoiding antireligious conflict and violence. FORKALA sent out interfaith teams to speak to all parties when it received a complaint.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Certain policies, laws, and official actions restricted religious freedom, and the Government sometimes tolerated discrimination against and the abuse of religious groups by private actors.

In 1980 the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) issued a "fatwa" (a nonlegal, nonbinding but influential opinion issued by Islamic religious leaders) declaring that Ahmadiyya did not form a legitimate part of Islam. Influenced by the fatwa, in 1984 the Religious Affairs Ministry issued a circular banning the Ahmadiyya from disseminating their teachings in Indonesia. In 2003 the Home Affairs Ministry affirmed Ahmadiyya's legal recognition. However, on July 28, 2005, the MUI renewed the 1980 fatwa. The press quoted the Minister of Religion M. Maftuh Basyuni in February as stating that Ahmadiyya members should either form a new religion or come back into the fold of mainstream Islam.

Some local governments banned Ahmadiyya activities after militant groups attacked Ahmadiyya mosques, homes, and other private property. In July 2005 the Bogor regency issued a decree prohibiting Ahmadiyya's activities. In September, following mob attacks on an Ahmadiyya compound, the CiriurCianjur Regency formally banned all Ahmadiyya activities. In October 2005 the regional representative office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in West Nusa Tenggara issued a ban on Ahmadiyya. This action followed existing bans in West Lombok (2001) and East Lombok (1983). Local governments claimed such bans sought to keep the peace or protect Ahmadiyya from further violence, but Ahmadiyya and their supporters argued that the local governments punished the victims and rewarded the perpetrators. The central Government condemned the use of violence; however, despite its jurisdiction over religious matters, the central Government did not

speak out against or formally review the bans.

The civil registration system continued to restrict religious freedom of persons who did not belong to the six recognized faiths; animists, Baha'is, and members of other small minority faiths found it impossible to register marriages or births. Couples prevented from registering their marriage or the birth of their child in accordance with their faiths had to either convert to one of the recognized faiths or misrepresent themselves as belonging to one of the six. Those who chose not to register their marriages or births risked future difficulties: a child without a birth certificate cannot enroll in school and may not qualify for scholarships. Individuals without birth certificates do not qualify for government jobs.

The first tenet of the country's national ideology, Pancasila, declares belief in one supreme God. The Government does not recognize atheism.

Religious groups and social organizations must obtain permits to hold religious concerts or other public events. The Government usually granted the permits in an unbiased manner unless a concern existed that the activity could anger members of another faith in the area.

The Government bans proselytizing, arguing that such activity, especially in areas heavily dominated by members of another religion, could prove disruptive. The Ministries of Religion and Home Affairs in 1979 issued a joint decree prohibiting members of one religion from trying to convert members of other faiths. During this reporting period, the Child Protection Law was used to prosecute individuals accused of attempting to convert Muslim children to Christianity.

Foreign religious organizations must obtain permission from the Ministry of Religious Affairs to provide any type of assistance (in-kind, personnel, and financial) to religious groups in the country. Although the Government generally did not enforce this requirement, some Christian groups stated that the Government applied it more frequently to minority groups than to mainstream Muslim groups.

Foreign missionaries must obtain religious worker visas, which some described as difficult to obtain or extend. The administrative requirements for religious worker visas prove more onerous than for other visa categories. They require not only approval from each office of the Department of Religion from the local to the national level but also statistical information on the number of followers of the religion in the community and a statement confirming that the applicant will work no more than two years in the country before replacement by a local citizen. Foreign missionaries granted such visas worked relatively unimpeded. Many missionaries with a primary focus on development work successfully registered for social visas with the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Education.

Religious speeches can take place if delivered to coreligionists and are not intended to convert persons of other faiths. Televised religious programming remained unrestricted, and viewers could watch religious programs offered by any of the recognized faiths. At times, the Government restricted religious speech.

No restrictions exist on the publication of religious materials or the use of religious symbols; however, the Government bans dissemination of these materials to persons of other faiths.

The Government had a monopoly on organizing the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca.

The Government requires all adult citizens to carry a National Identity Card (KTP), which identifies, among other things, the holder's religion. Members of faiths not recognized by the Government generally cannot obtain KTPs unless they incorrectly identify themselves as a member of a recognized religion. During the period covered by this report, some Civil Registry officials rejected applications submitted by members of unrecognized faiths, while others accepted applications but issued KTPs that inaccurately reflected the applicants' religion. Some animists received KTPs that listed their religion as Islam. Many Sikhs register as Hindu because the government does not officially recognize their religion. Until February 2006 when the Government began providing administrative services to Confucians, some Confucians received Buddhist KTPs. Even some Protestants and Catholics received KTPs listing them as Muslims. It appears that Civil Registry staff used Islam as the "default" category for many members of unrecognized faiths. Islam remained the only recognized religion that could be claimed without proof and was administratively the least burdensome.

Some citizens without a KTP had difficulty finding work. Several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and religious advocacy groups continued to urge the Government to delete the religion category from KTPs.

Government employees must swear allegiance to the nation and to the national ideology, Pancasila, which includes belief in one supreme God.

The law does not discriminate against any religious group in employment, education, housing, or health care; however, some Christians and members of other religious minority groups believed they often were excluded from prime civil service postings and graduate student positions at public universities.

Men and women of different religions faced serious obstacles to marrying and officially registering their marriages. Such couples had difficulty finding a religious official willing to perform an interfaith marriage ceremony; a religious ceremony is required before a marriage can be registered. As a result, some persons converted in order to marry. Others traveled overseas, where they wed and then registered the marriage at an Indonesian embassy. Despite being among the officially recognized faiths, Hindus stated that they frequently had to travel long distances to have their marriages registered, because in many rural areas the local government could not or would not perform the registration.

The armed forces provide religious facilities and programs, including services and prayer meetings, at all major housing complexes for servicemen and servicewomen who practice one of the major officially recognized religions. Although every military housing complex must provide a mosque, a Catholic church, a Protestant church, and worship centers or temples for Buddhists and Hindus, smaller compounds rarely offer facilities for all five religions.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

During this reporting period certain policies, laws, and official actions restricted the religious freedom of the Ahmadiyya community. While mass Islamic organizations condemned the use of violence, the Government implicitly tolerated discrimination and abuse by some societal members toward the Ahmadiyya by remaining silent on both their legal status and local bans.

Despite a heavy police presence during two separate attacks on an Ahmadiyya Congregation in West Java in July 2005, police made no arrests. A local ban was subsequently passed against the Ahmadiyya, and they were prevented from using their complex. Following two separate incidents in February and March 2006 in which mobs burned or destroyed dozens of Ahmadiyya homes in Lombok, 182 residents began living in government-provided barracks with no viable plan for their return or resettlement.

After the Government promulgated the Regulation on Building Houses of Worship in 2006, a revision of the 1969 decree, militant groups forcibly closed two churches without police intervention despite a two-year grace period contained in the revised regulation for houses of worship to obtain permits per the new requirements. At the end of the reporting period, these churches remained closed. Another twenty churches, closed under pressure from militant groups the promulgation of the revised decree, also remain closed. Though often present, police almost never acted to prevent forced church closings and sometimes assisted militant groups in the closure.

In early June 2006 the central Government announced its intentions to crack down on vigilantism by militant groups, but at the end of the reporting period, there were no specific reports of action.

During this reporting period, the Government also continued to explicitly and implicitly restrict the religious freedom of groups associated with forms of Islam viewed as outside the mainstream.

In October 2005 the regional representative office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in West Nusa Tenggara issued a ban on thirteen religious sects, including Ahmadiyya, Jehovah's Witness, Hari Krishna, and nine forms of traditional beliefs (aliran kepercayaan), as being deviations of Islam, Christianity, and Hinduism.

On December 28, 2005, police arrested Lia Eden, leader of Jamaah Alamulla, and evacuated twenty of her followers to avoid violence during a riot demanding closure of the small sect. On June 29, 2006, a Jakarta district court sentenced Eden to two years in prison for denigrating a religion. The few adherents of Jamaah Alamulla believe that the angel Gabriel speaks through Eden and combine elements of Christianity and Islam. The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) issued an edict in 1997, in which Lia Eden's sect was declared deviant.

Followers of a small sect loosely based on Islam clashed with police in October 2005 in a remote village outside Palu, Central Sulawesi. Police made several attempts to negotiate with the charismatic leader of the group, known by his followers as "Madi," to come to the police station and respond to complaints that he threatened local villagers and prevented some from fasting and praying during Ramadan. Three policemen and two sect members died in the clash; sect members reportedly held two police officers hostage but later released them. Prosecutors in January 2006 called for the death penalty for five sect members being tried by local courts.

Police arrested three women from the Christian Church of Camp David (GKKD) in Indramayu, West Java, and in September 2005 the court sentenced them to three years in jail under the Child Protection Law for allegedly attempting to convert Muslim children to Christianity. Prosecutors charged the women after community members complained the women used Christian youth recreation programs to proselytize Muslim children. The women claimed that family members gave permission for their children to attend the event. Witnesses failed to support the women during the trial, however, because of alleged intimidation from the community. At the time of this report the defendants' case remained on appeal at the Supreme Court.

In November 2005 local police detained a foreign citizen and an Indonesian associated with a Christian working on a humanitarian dam building project in a known conservative Muslim area on the island of Madura. Police acted after local religious leaders alleged that the two engaged in proselytizing. The allegations appeared to be sparked by ire on the part of leaders and their communities that had not received similar projects. Prosecutors charged the foreign citizen with immigration violations, and the court sentenced him to five months in prison; prosecutors charged the Indonesian citizen, who continued to publicly profess a nontraditional version of Islam, with denigrating a religion and the court sentenced him to two and a half years in prison.

During this reporting period, there were incidents in which the Government arrested and charged individuals with heresy, blasphemy, and insulting Islam

In August 2005 East Java's Malang District Court sentenced Muhammad Yusman Roy to two years in jail for reciting Muslim prayers in the Indonesian language, which MUI said tarnished the purity of Arabic-based Islam.

In September 2005 an East Java court sentenced each of six drug and cancer treatment counselors to five years in jail and another to three years in jail for violating key precepts of Islam. A local MUI edict characterized their rehabilitation center's teachings as heretical. Police arrested the counselors while they tried to defend themselves from hundreds of persons who raided the center's headquarters.

In January 2006 the Government charged Sumardi Tappaya, a Muslim high school religious teacher on Sulawesi Island, for heresy, a crime punishable by up to five years in prison. Police jailed Tappaya after a relative accused him of whistling during prayers. The local MUI declared the whistling as deviant. On June 28 the Polewali State Court sentenced Sumardi to six months in jail.

The Government restricted religious speech by arresting individuals accused of criticizing Islam or Muslims.

In June 2005, 2,000 persons protested against an opinion article, entitled "Islam, A Failed Religion," written by a lecturer at the Muhammadiyah University in Palu. The article, among other things, highlighted the spread of corruption in the country. Police criminally charged the writer for heresy and held him for 5 days before placing him on house arrest.

In August 2005 police dropped the case against a cartoonist and a newspaper editor in Medan, North Sumatra, for lack of evidence. Police initially arrested them in October 2004 for running a caricature suggesting Muslims habitually support corrupt political candidates.

On March 6 and 7, 2006, Falun Dafa (also known as Falun Gong) members staged a two-day hunger strike in front of the Chinese embassy in protest of an attack against a Falun Dafa journalist. On April 12, 2006, police in Banyuwangi, East Java, arrested five Falun Dafa activists, two of them foreigners, for distributing circulars to local residents. Police later claimed they arrested the five because the circulars contained information about the Chinese Communist party, not because the activists were Falun Dafa members; distribution of Communist literature remains illegal. On April 26, 2006, unknown persons physically attacked a Falun Dafa member in Jakarta who sought to start a demonstration together with a fellow member. Police did not investigate the attack.

The press reported that in May 2006 the Banyuwangi Regional Legislature voted to oust Banyuwangi Regent Ratna Ani Lestari from office. Those in favor of the ouster accused Ratna, a Muslim by birth, of blaspheming Islam for allegedly practicing a different religion from the one stated on her identity card. They also accused her of underfunding Islamic boarding schools in the area, improperly using Quranic verses in election materials, and including the price of pork in the regional budget. Ratna's supporters said she was the target of a religiously motivated smear campaign because of her marriage to a Hindu.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor United States citizens abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal to allow such citizens to return to the United States.

Anti-Semitism

Sabili, a widely read Islamic magazine, published articles with anti-Semitic statements and themes. It made assertions suggesting the existence of covert conspiratorial "Zionist" activities ongoing in the country. A CD produced by Trustco Multimedia, a commercial entity, containing political material on the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), which holds 8 percent of the country's parliamentary seats, also contained an anti-Semitic game entitled "Shoot the Jews." PKS subsequently asked Trustco Multimedia to pull the CD from consumer shelves.

Abuses by Terrorist Organizations

Religiously motivated terrorists active in the region carried out one major attack in the country during the period covered by this report. On October 1, 2005, three suicide bombers from the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) terror group killed twenty-two persons and injured more than one hundred in the tourist areas of Kuta and Jimbaran in Bali. The death penalty trials of suspects Mohamad Cholili (alias Yahya), Abdul Aziz (alias Jafar), Dwi Widiyanto (alias Wiwid), and Anif Solchanudin (alias Pendek) were ongoing at the end of this reporting period.

Some Muslims criticized the arrest and prosecution of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, the head of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) terrorist group, who was found guilty and sentenced to thirty months in jail for involvement in the 2002 Bali bombings and acquitted of more serious terrorism charges. During his imprisonment, the Government, in accordance with national law, granted Ba'asyir one remission for good behavior. On June 14, 2006, he was released from prison after serving twenty-six months.

The Government successfully prosecuted more than fifty-two religiously motivated terrorists and their associates during the period covered by this report. Those prosecuted not only included members of JI but also other groups of terrorists and religious extremists. The Government successfully prosecuted six persons for the September 2004 suicide attack on the Australian Embassy that killed ten persons and injured more than one hundred. The court sentenced Rois and Ahmad Hasan to death, Saipul Bahri to ten years in jail, and the three other participants to between three and seven years in jail. Local courts in Maluku continued to aggressively try cases of those allegedly responsible for violence in the province. During the reporting period, the Maluku courts convicted thirty-two persons under the antiterrorism law for involvement in extremist violence in the province. Sentences ranged from five years to life in prison.

Improvements and Positive Developments in Respect for Religious Freedom

In a 2006 speech celebrating Chinese New Year, the President promised that the Government would now provide services to Confucians as a member of an officially recognized religion, and in early 2006 he instructed the Religious Affairs and Home Affairs ministries to carry out his promise. As a result, Confucians could obtain identity cards that reflected their religious affiliation and register Confucian marriages and births.

The Government organized and facilitated an international and interfaith dialogue in the Philippines on March 14, 2006. Representatives

from the ten member states of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) attended as well as representatives from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and East Timor.

Local police in Central Sulawesi were more active in punishing those allegedly involved in violence that may be related to interreligious strife. In June 2005 police arrested eighteen suspects in the May 28, 2005, Tentena bombing. The head of Poso prison, Hasman, was also arrested, but police subsequently released Hasman and all other suspects for lack of evidence. In Central Sulawesi, police arrested Papa Siti, suspected in the 2004 shooting of prosecutor Ferry Silalahi, on July 17, 2005, in Malino village of Tojo Una-Una Regency. On March 15, 2006, Central Sulawesi police detained Andi Makasau, the alleged mastermind of a series of armed robberies, fatal shootings, and bombings in the province, along with six other persons allegedly involved in violence there. The case remained ongoing. On May 7, 2006, police arrested five men in connection with acts of terrorism and other violent crimes in Central Sulawesi.

Local police in Central Sulawesi continued to protect local churches and other prayer houses during religious services.

Section III. Societal Abuses and Discrimination

In general Muslims remained tolerant and had a pluralistic outlook; however, in January 2006 the Indonesia Survey Institute (LSI) concluded that conservatism was on the rise. In a nationwide survey, 40 percent approved of stoning to death adulterers, 34 percent did not want another female president, and 40 percent found polygamy acceptable.

Economic tensions between local or native peoples, predominantly non-Muslim, and more recent migrants, predominantly Muslim, played a significant role in incidents of interreligious and interethnic violence in Central Sulawesi, Papua, and Kalimantan.

In Central Sulawesi, political and economic tensions between approximately equal populations of Christians and Muslims continued to cause sporadic violent episodes resulting in deaths during the reporting period. It remained unclear whether these incidents arose from interreligious conflict, criminal motives, or a combination of the two. On October 29, 2005, unidentified attackers ambushed and beheaded three Christian schoolgirls near Poso, Central Sulawesi; police investigation into the killings was ongoing. Days after the beheading, unidentified individuals shot and killed two teenage girls, one Muslim and one Christian, at a bus stop in Poso, in what may have been a revenge attack. That same week, attackers shot and injured a Palu-area university professor and his wife. On December 31, unknown perpetrators bombed a Palu Market selling pork, killing seven persons and injuring more than fifty. Police arrested one suspect but later released him due to lack of evidence. On May 7, 2006, the press reported that police arrested five men for alleged connections with terrorism and violence in the region, including the beheadings and the fatal 2004 shooting of Reverend Susianti.

On October 21, 2005, in Central Sulawesi, a man on a motorcycle fired at a house used for prayer meetings by a Christian congregation, injuring the owner.

A small bomb exploded outside a Hindu temple in a village near Poso, Central Sulawesi, in March 2006, seriously wounding a man who was guarding the compound.

In Maluku Province the number of those killed in possibly sectarian incidents continued to fall significantly during the period covered by this report. Maluku remained relatively calm since riots surrounding the commemoration of a separatist group in April 2004 killed dozens of Ambon residents; however, on August 24, 2005, a homemade bomb exploded from inside a pedicab in the Mardika market in Ambon City, injuring nine persons and damaging motorcycles and cars parked nearby. Police made five arrests; but continued to search for the suspected mastermind of the bombing.

A significant number of houses of worship were attacked, vandalized, forced to shut down, or prevented from being established as a result of militant groups and mobs throughout the country.

According to the Indonesian Christian Communication Forum (FKKI), militant groups forced the closing of at least thirty-four churches: twenty-five in West Java, six in Banten, two in Central Java, and 1 in South Sulawesi during the reporting period. Some churches were attacked while services were in session. The Islam Defenders Group (FPI) and the Alliance for Anti-Apostates (AGAP) backed by local Muslim communities orchestrated most of the church closings. Some church leaders reported those groups threatened them with sticks and similar weapons to close down their church, although there were no reports of actual physical injuries. AGAP and FPI said they targeted churches that operated without the required permission of the local government and the surrounding community as required by the 1969 Joint Ministerial Decree on Houses of Worship. Many of the targeted churches operated out of private homes and storefronts. Although often present, police almost never acted to prevent forced church closings and sometimes assisted militant groups in the closure.

Muslims routinely reported difficulties in establishing mosques in Muslim-minority areas of Papua, North Sulawesi, and elsewhere.

During the reporting period, police concluded that a mentally ill man, Mangku Laper, was responsible for the January 2005 vandalism of at least six Hindu temples in Legian, Tuban, Kuta, and Kedoganan, Bali.

Conflict continued over the Sang Timur Catholic School near Jakarta. In 2004 a local Muslim community group, the Karang Tengah Islam Community Foundation (KTICF), with help from members of FPI, erected a wall that blocked access to the Sang Timur Catholic School. Local government workers later knocked the wall down, but in November 2005 local residents again blocked the main access to the school to prevent the school from rebuilding the access road. The incident reportedly did not disrupt the daily activities of the school.

On February 5, 2006, hundreds of persons closed down a luxurious house used as a Hindu temple called Guedwara Dharma Kalsa Temple

in Karang Tengah District, Tangerang City, Banten Province. The residents in the neighborhood objected to the use of the house as a temple, arguing that no Hindus lived in the area.

Mobs attacked and vandalized at least seven Ahmadiyya mosques in West Java and two Ahmadiyya mosques in South Sulawesi during the reporting period.

On July 15, 2005, despite a heavy police presence, the Islam Defenders Group (FPI) led a mob in attacking the Ahmadiyya Indonesia Congregation (JAI) headquarters in Bogor, West Java. Armed with stones and batons, the assailants damaged Ahmadiyya buildings and set fire to a women's dormitory. The attack followed an aborted July 9 attack on the same Ahmadiyya property by individuals associated with the FPI. Police made no arrests in either attack. On July 20, 2005, the Bogor regency Consultative Leadership Council in West Java regency issued a decree prohibiting Ahmadiyya's activities in the area. The perpetrators of the attacks justified their actions by referring to the 1980 fatwa that declared Ahmadiyya to be "deviant" from Islam.

On September 19, 2005, in Cianjur, West Java, a mob reportedly attacked and vandalized an Ahmadiyya mosque and private homes and cars belonging to Ahmadiyya members; however, unlike the July attacks, the police reportedly arrested forty-five suspects and pursued criminal charges against twelve alleged ringleaders. Cianjur Regency formally banned all Ahmadiyya activities on September 28, 2005, purportedly to protect Ahmadiyya members from further attacks. The Ahmadiyya compound remained closed through the Idul Fitri holiday, an event that 500 to 700 followers normally attend, and remained closed at the end of this reporting period.

In two separate incidents in February and March 2006, mobs attacked, burned, or otherwise destroyed dozens of homes in Lombok, forcing 182 residents to evacuate and live in government provided barracks. At the end of the reporting period there was no viable plan for their resettlement.

On June 16, 2006, dozens of community members forced approximately fifty followers of Jamaah Salafi out of their village, Beroro, in West Nusa Tenggara. Attackers dragged the Salafi leader out of the village mosque to force him to sign an agreement stating the Salafi members would not return to their homes. Residents claimed they repeatedly warned Salafi members that the loud preaching emanating from the Jamaah Salafi's mosque on Fridays was offensive. Police were on the scene to prevent further physical violence but arrested no one in connection with the incident. After seeking shelter at the police station, members safely returned home after community dialogues.

At times hard-line religious groups used pressure, intimidation, or violence against those whose message they found offensive. Despite continued criticism from Islamic hardliners, the Liberal Islam Network (JIL) maintained public appeals for individual interpretation of Islamic doctrine and religious tolerance. JIL confronted hardliners in public forums, including seminars. On August 5, 2005, approximately 200 members of the FPI and the Islamic Umat Forum (FUI) gathered to attack JIL offices with the aim of forcing them out of Jakarta. Police blocked the access road to JIL, effectively forcing the mob to disband.

Militants purporting to uphold public morality sometimes attacked cafes and nightclubs that they considered venues for prostitution or that had not made payments to extremist groups. On October 16, 2005, during the holy month of Ramadan, 200 members of FPI attacked a known area of prostitution, clashing with tens of local residents. Police broke up the fight but made no arrests.

On some occasions, publications with controversial religious themes provoked outrage. In December 2005 the World Hindu Youth Organization (WHYO) protested the short film, "Shinta Obong," a film based on a story in "Ramayana," a holy Hindu book, for deviating from the original story. The filmmaker, Garin Nugroho, met with the Hindu community in Bali in January 2006 to apologize.

Unforced conversions between faiths occurred, as allowed by law, but they remained a source of controversy. Some converted to marry a person of another faith; others converted in response to religious outreach or social activities organized by religious groups. Some Muslims accused Christian missionaries of using food and microcredit programs to lure poor Muslims to conversion. Some of those who converted felt compelled not to publicize the event for family and social reasons.

Faith-based social organizations at times reportedly extracted financial contributions from non-Muslim merchants, particularly before major Islamic holidays. Most commonly, these actions relied on social pressure from Muslim-majority communities. Many of those targeted were ethnic Chinese, who generally practiced Buddhism, Christianity, or Confucianism.

In late July 2005 MUI issued a fatwa denouncing pluralism, secularism, and liberal forms of Islam, along with interfaith marriage and interfaith prayer. While the fatwa generated heated debates and served as a factor behind subsequent militant actions, it produced no perceptible substantive impact on the law.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. mission in Indonesia, including the U.S. embassy in Jakarta, the consulate general in Surabaya, and the Medan office, regularly engaged government officials on specific religious freedom issues and also encouraged officials from other embassies to discuss the subject with the Government. Embassy staff at all levels met frequently with religious leaders and human rights advocates to promote respect for religious freedom. Embassy staff met regularly with NU and Muhammadiyah officials to clarify U.S. policy and discuss religious tolerance and other issues.

Mission outreach emphasized the importance of religious freedom and tolerance in a democratic society. During the period covered by this report, the mission promoted pluralism and tolerance through exchanges and civil society programs.

More than 220 Indonesians visited the United States on short-term programs examining the role of religion in U.S. society and politics. The program allowed these persons to see first hand how religious pluralism, interfaith dialogue, and multiculturalism are integral to a democratic society. Ten Fulbright scholars from the country went to the United States to study degrees directly related to religion in a democratic society. Six U.S. scholars came to the country to teach and conduct research on similar topics.

One notable visit during the period featured a speaking tour by Diana Eck in conjunction with the launch of the embassy-produced translation of her book, "A New Religious America"; programs like this (25 in all) contributed balance and academic rigor to current discourse in the country about the place of religion in society.

The U.S. mission reached millions through the production of media programs critical to providing in-depth coverage on religious freedom issues from an American perspective. The mission cosponsored a radio show featuring perspectives on religious difference, tolerance, and pluralism from the perspective of the country's high school and college students living in the United States. A press tour and a jointly produced documentary series generated positive coverage of civic society and volunteerism in America, highlighting how faith-based groups are part of the diverse mix that define positive citizen action in America. The mission contributed a 1,000 sets of video compact discs based on another jointly produced television documentary series, "The Colors of Democracy," highlighting the positive impact of religious pluralism and interfaith activities in schools and libraries.

The mission supported the "Religion and Tolerance" call-in weekly talk show that is one of the most widely heard radio talk shows in Asia, promoting democracy, gender equality, and religious pluralism. Listeners from Aceh to Papua responded enthusiastically to the radio program.

Beginning March 2006 the United States, through the Centre for Religious and Cultural Studies at Gajah Mada University in Yogyakarta, started a biweekly-televised talk show simultaneously broadcasted on fifty-eight radio stations throughout the country. The program provided an estimated three million listeners the opportunity to listen to and actively engage in public debates on religious tolerance, human rights, and democracy. The biweekly publication of talk-show transcripts and articles in the newspaper further ensured public access to the debates.

Released on September 15, 2006

[International Religious Freedom Report Home Page](#)